

IKONS

Cannèll, Skipwith, 1887-1957

1

I broke a savage bitch
 who has two tails.
I named her 'Beauty'
 from a beast
 in Mythology.

We cannot live
 in the houses of other men,
We cannot breathe
 air from their sick bellies;
I will travel into lonely places
To laugh and think new thoughts.

2

I have been all
 wrong from the beginning.
I will re-create myself.
I will be right.
But I'm in too great haste
 to pluck lice away.

3

Let others wash me, serve food to me
And cleanse my pot.

I cannot be a pot-man.

How can I serve?
How can I be kind or unkind

And myself.

I can be neither more kind nor less kind
Than a meteor
Falling in a city.

Let the pot-men fester in the filth of their pots:
I must uncover
God's feet for the dancing.

1

A fool once said to me,
"How strange it is that you are
Glad and drunken."

I have burned a thousand things
Desirable but not mine.
I will not dance before God
with my privates swathed in cloth.

2

We young men come up from our beginnings crying,
"Way! Make way for us!"
The old ones stand against us
Like lions who are old and angry.

One by one they fall
Under our feet.

Behind us the land is flat
Save for ghosts and the stone giants.

3

Some day the young men
Will come upon me
Crying, "Down with him! Down with him!"

I long for the day when the young men

Come against me.
To try our strength.

1

I have owed much to older people.
Why should I deny it?
To Nietzsche and Mrs. Eddy and Blake and Whitman and Gauguin and those old Egyptians who
cut for eternity.

I shall pass over some of these.
I shall crush them.
But
I owe much to older people.
Why should I deny it?

2

I will gobble up everything
That has been mine from the beginning.
Though I find it in the homes of other men
or in their purses or their thoughts
I will gobble up all
To the last jot of my own.

The man who ploughs fields is right
be the fields his or another's,
Pot-men are always right
and even the masters
have ploughed strange fields in their day.

For myself
I am no longer concerned with ploughing,
It's for the harvest I yearn,
The harvest the bare land the full dancing.

3

God made dancing.

Only pot-men walk.

The dancers gather at God's table
For joy that is drunken.

Lead was first smelted
From the souls of pot-men.

1

He who pulls flowers wantonly
Is a giant.
He who pulls flowers for their loveliness or perfume
Is one who can destroy giants
with the perfume of flowers.

I dislike men who sleep with too many women.
I despise those loving their own sex.

They are wrong I am right.

I do not understand this
but it is true.

2

Men wash in their women
As gulls in the sea.
When they have spewed forth their white children,
Though they dislike children,
They are happy
Pure.

I do not understand this
but it is true.

3

I went walking on the beaches.

Like sand grains were young men and young women
Lying two by two.

I went walking on the beaches.

With my lantern
I looked in the young men's faces,
And they were all I.

I went walking on the beaches.

The beaches were empty.
They put out the sun like a candle
and all the stars
the moon

and my lantern.
A voice cried from the sea,
"If I vomit a woman at your feet
take her
breed children."

But I had spent my strength.

Then I woke up.

1

A coyote yapping at the moon
A wolf grinning at the lightning
Is the man of poems
Shouting of Him.

Him!

Him!

Glory on a dying fish.
Blue flies over the garbage.

Him!

Him!

O jackal sobbing at his loneliness.

2

Moon, demon of the heavens,
How great must your hatred be
for the peoples of earth.

Moon, I have poison,
hot and secret.
I will give you my poison,
devil of the sky.

You are crowned with stars.
We shall take your crown away.
We shall give your crown to the sun because of dawns.

O wolf of the sky yapping at your moon.

3

I am tired of old colors
and old sounds,
I will make new sounds with my mouth
and they shall be music.

I will make new sounds
and new jumps and gestures.

When women lie down before us,
Making soft noises. . . .
Our eyes become yellow and we go to them
As mad eagles to the sun.

Women are green and barreled like guns,
Men are red and primed cartridges.
I despise everything that is not
Green or red.

We are red, they green; and their greenness
Gives our red value and violence.

And when we leave you
With softness,
With kisses,
We are rich we are selves,
When we withdraw
Deeply
Into the sea.